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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 24 February 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I must draw your urgent attention to the dangerously rising tensions in Occupied East Jerusalem. The illegal policies and the constant provocations and incitement by Israel, the occupying Power, and its extremist settlers against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy places continue to exacerbate tensions and religious sensitivities between the two sides, risking further destabilization of an already fragile situation on the ground.

In this regard, I must inform you of the extremely worrying developments today, 24 February, at Al-Haram Al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary) in Occupied East Jerusalem, in which Israeli occupying forces stormed the holy compound and used excessive force against worshippers. The incidents took place after the Friday noon prayers at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which houses Al-Aqsa Mosque and Qubbat Al-Sakhra (the Dome of the Rock), when hundreds of Palestinian worshippers began a demonstration in protest of the recent threats and declared attempts by Jewish extremists to enter the holy compound. According to reports, the Israeli occupying forces unleashed tear gas, stun grenades, sound bombs and rubber bullets against the demonstrators, causing fear and panic to spread among them. Medics with the Red Crescent Society have reported that around 30 Palestinians were injured. In addition, at least 13 Palestinians are said to have been detained by the occupying forces.

The international community must pay heed to the escalation of tensions and confrontations in and around Al-Haram Al-Sharif, since the potential for a refuelling of the cycle of violence as a result of such provocations is very real. As noted in recent prior letters, the holy compound and other Muslim and Christian holy sites throughout Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory continue to be subjected to threats, incitement and desecration by extremist Israeli settlers as well as constant provocations by right-wing Israeli officials, and this has led to escalating concerns among the Palestinian people and

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their leadership about the potential for further crisis in this most sensitive area. Recent threats against Al-Haram Al-Sharif have included postings on an extremist Jewish website threatening a mass incursion into the holy compound to "exercise Jewish sovereignty" over the area. Such incitement has been coupled by calls by right-wing Israeli leaders for Jews to come to the compound to assert their claims over it, with flyers recently distributed imploring them to "purify the site from the enemies of Israel" as well as advocating for the destruction of any Muslim buildings there.

We believe that all such acts of incitement and desecration against holy sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as acts of the ongoing, deliberate provocations against the Palestinian people by the occupying Power, whether it be by the Government of Israel, its occupying forces or its illegal settlers, warrant serious and immediate attention by the international community, including by the Security Council, in line with its primary duty under the Charter to maintain international peace and security. We call on the international community to act with urgency and responsibility to ensure the de-escalation of this perilous situation in Occupied East Jerusalem and to bring a halt to the occupying Power's violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, which are gravely impacting the Palestinian people in innumerable ways and which are seriously jeopardizing the prospects for realizing a peaceful and just settlement on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

Before concluding, I regret to also inform you of the killing today of a young Palestinian man, Tal'at Ramia, age 25, by Israel, the occupying Power. Ramia was wounded by Israeli gunfire, which hit him in the chest, during a protest that was held near the Qalandia checkpoint erected by Israel between Al-Ram and Ramallah. He later died in emergency surgery, and five other Palestinians were also wounded by the occupying forces, which fired tear gas as well as live and rubber bullets at the protesters. Today also witnessed more violence by the occupying Power against Palestinian civilians in Al-Khalil who had been peacefully demonstrating at a commemoration of the anniversary of a 1994 attack by an extremist Israeli settler against Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi (The Ibrahimi Mosque) in Al-Khalil, in which 29 Palestinians were brutally murdered while at prayer. The Israeli occupying forces fired tear gas and sound bombs, injuring dozens of civilians, 70 of whom suffered from the inhalation of foul-smelling chemicals that were also sprayed at the protesters. At least six Palestinians were also detained by the occupying forces. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held responsible for the death and injury of these Palestinians caused by its deliberate use of violence and brutality against the Palestinian civilian population under its military occupation and its blatant disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law requiring the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 418 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 23 February 2012 (A/ES-10/546-S/2012/111) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian

people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations